

# Hat Ranch wins 2015 Idaho Wine Competition

By Andy Perdue, September 23, 2015



*Tim and Helen Harless own Hat Ranch Winery near Caldwell, Idaho. Their 2014 Estate Dry Moscato won best of show at the 2015 Idaho Wine Competition. (Photo by Andy Perdue/Great Northwest Wine)*

CALDWELL, Idaho – A dry Muscat from the Sunnyslope Wine District earned best of show Tuesday at the sixth annual Idaho Wine Competition.

Hat Ranch Winery in Caldwell won for its 2014 Dry Muscat, the first crop from its estate grapes. The wine was crafted by Tim and Helen Harless, who launched their small winery in 2011.

“It is a bit unusual,” said Tim Harless. “We have to think of something new and different to change people’s minds about what moscato can be. There are many examples of sugar sweet moscatos out there in the world, and we just thought it was so wonderful the way it was.”

The Harlesses made 126 cases of the Dry Moscato. Last month, it earned the top “Outstanding!” rating in a blind tasting from Great Northwest Wine.

The couple, who met while serving in the U.S. Air Force, moved to Idaho wine country from Texas specifically to plant grapes and make wine. They planted their first half-acre of Muscat Ottonel in the fall of 2011, then added another acre the next year. They’ve already harvested the grapes for their 2015 Moscato, which they plan to make in a similar dry style.

Hat Ranch Winery is open noon to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday. The couple also operate a bed and breakfast at their winery.

Laissez Faire, a label for Cinder Wines in Garden City, won best red wine for its Sangiovese-led red blend. Best rosé came from Sawtooth Estate Winery in Nampa for its 2014 Classic Fly Series Grenache Rosé. And best dessert wine went to Bitner Vineyards’ 2014 Late Harvest Riesling.

The competition is conducted by Great Northwest Wine. It took place at Ste. Chapelle in Caldwell.



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Judges for this year's competition were: Mike Dunne, wine writer for the Sacramento Bee in California; Ilene Dudunake, owner of A New Vintage Wine Shop in Meridian, Idaho; Karen McMillin of Hayden Beverage/Young's Market of Idaho in the Boise suburb of Meridian; Kathryn House, enologist and educator for House of Wine in Boise; April Reddout, wine program manager for the Walter Clore Wine & Culinary Center in Prosser, Wash.; Lane Hoss, wine buyer and vice president of marketing for Anthony's Restaurants in Kirkland, Wash.; Mike Rader of Kennewick, Wash., member of Great Northwest Wine's tasting panel; and Ken Robertson, columnist for Wine Press Northwest magazine in Kennewick, Wash.

The judges evaluated 159 wines from throughout Idaho. They judged the wines under blind conditions, meaning they knew neither the producer nor the price of the wine until after the competition was completed.

### California wine writer wowed at Idaho Wine Competition



*Mike Dunne, wine writer for the Sacramento Bee in California, judged the Idaho Wine Competition and came away impressed by the wines of the Gem State. (Photo by Andy Perdue/Great Northwest Wine)*

Dunne, one of California's most accomplished wine writers and wine judges, wrote a column about Idaho wine a few months ago after receiving samples from the Idaho Wine Commission. But this is his first wine-focused visit to Idaho, and he came away impressed.

"I think that overall, this judging showed that beyond California, Oregon and Washington, there are really exciting things happening with growing grapes and making wines," Dunne told Great Northwest Wine. "I've been surprised by the diversity and the overall quality."

During the judging, Dunne was particularly pleased with the four examples of Tempranillo he tasted. He said the Tempranillo he tastes from California is not especially interesting, but the high-elevation vineyards in the Snake River Valley seem to be a great location for the red Spanish variety.

"They seemed so much more true to varietal than what I've experienced in California," he said. "I appreciate coming here to get a broader view of Idaho. There were a lot of surprises."

Here are the complete results of the sixth annual Idaho Wine Competition.



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**Best of show**

Hat Ranch Winery 2014 Estate Dry Moscato, Snake River Valley, \$18

**Best red**

Laissez Faire 2014 Red, Snake River Valley, \$16

**Best rosé**

Sawtooth Winery 2014 Classic Fly Series Grenache Rosé, Snake River Valley, \$20

**Best dessert**

Bitner Vineyards 2014 Late Harvest Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$19

**Double gold/best of class**

Vizcaya Winery 2011 Tempranillo, Snake River Valley, \$29

**Gold/best of class**

Bitner Vineyards 2013 Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$17

Cinder Wines 2014 Dry Viognier, Snake River Valley, \$18

Huston Vineyards 2013 Merlot, Snake River Valley, \$27

Huston Vineyards 2014 Chicken Dinner White, Snake River Valley, \$16

Sawtooth Estate Winery 2012 Trout Trilogy Malbec, Snake River Valley, \$35

Ste. Chapelle 2013 Panoramic Idaho Syrah, Snake River Valley, \$25

**Double gold**

Colter's Creek Winery 2014 Ice Wine, Idaho, \$20

**Gold**

Bitner Vineyards 2012 Erletxe Tempranillo, Snake River Valley, \$27

Camas Prairie Winery 2015 Strawberry Mead, Idaho, \$14

Cinder Wines 2013 Tempranillo, Snake River Valley, \$29

Cinder Wines 2013 Syrah, Snake River Valley, \$28

Cinder Wines 2014 Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$18

Cinder Wines 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot-Malbec, Snake River Valley, \$28

Clearwater Canyon Cellars 2013 Carménère, Washington, \$28

Clearwater Canyon Cellars 2013 Renaissance Red, Washington/Idaho, \$23

Coiled Wine 2013 Black Mamba, Snake River Valley, \$30



Cold Springs Winery 2009 Phren/ology Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$10

Colter's Creek Winery 2012 Koos•koos•kia Red, Idaho, \$22

Crossings Winery 2012 Bleu Noir Blaufrankisch, Snake River Valley, \$19

Crossings Winery 2012 Zabala Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Snake River Valley, \$19

Indian Creek Winery 2014 Muscat Canelli, Snake River Valley, \$15

Lindsay Creek Vineyards 2013 Mourvèdre, Washington, \$31

Sawtooth Winery 2014 Estate Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$12

Sawtooth Winery 2014 Classic Fly Series Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$20

Snake River Winery 2012 Arena Valley Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Snake River Valley, \$20

Snake River Winery 2013 Arena Valley Vineyard Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$10

Ste. Chapelle 2013 Panoramic Idaho Malbec, Snake River Valley, \$25

Ste. Chapelle 2014 Panoramic Idaho Riesling Ice Wine, Snake River Valley, \$25

Telaya Wine Co. 2013 Turas, Snake River Valley, \$32

Williamson Vineyard 2011 Reserve Petite Sirah, Snake River Valley, \$35

### **Silver**

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$23

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2011 Barrel Select Reserve Merlot, Washington, \$23

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2014 Roussanne, Washington, \$19

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Syrah-Mourvèdre, Snake River Valley, \$26

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2011 Reserve Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$15

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Single Vineyard Syrah, Snake River Valley, \$21

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2014 Vivacious White, Snake River Valley, \$18

Bitner Vineyards 2011 Cabernet-Shiraz, Snake River Valley, \$28

Cinder Wine 2014 Off-Dry Viognier, Snake River Valley, \$18

Clearwater Canyon Cellars 2013 Verhey Vineyard Malbec, Washington, \$28

Coiled Wine 2013 Sidewinder, Snake River Valley, \$28



Colter's Creek Winery 2012 Arrow Rim Red GSM, Idaho, \$25

Colter's Creek Winery 2013 Syrah, Snake River Valley, \$18

Crossings Winery 2012 Bubbles Sparkling Estate Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$30

Crossings Winery 2011 Wood River Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$24

Fujishin Family Cellars 2013 Petit Verdot, Snake River Valley, \$23

Fujishin Family Cellars 2013 Amatino Red Blend, Snake River Valley, \$23

Huston Vineyards 2014 Private Reserve Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$24

Huston Vineyards 2013 Malbec, Snake River Valley, \$29

Huston Vineyards 2012 Private Reserve Petite Sirah, Snake River Valley, \$55

Huston Vineyards 2014 Chicken Dinner Red, Snake River Valley, \$18

Indian Creek Winery 2014 Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$12

Indian Creek Winery 2014 Mountain Syringa Dry White, Snake River Valley, \$14

Indian Creek Winery 2012 Star Garnet, Snake River Valley, \$14

Koenig Vineyards 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$22

Koenig Vineyards 2012 Williamson Vineyard Petite Sirah, Snake River Valley, \$25

Koenig Vineyards 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah, Snake River Valley, \$25

Koenig Vineyards 2014 Estate Vineyard Viognier, Snake River Valley, \$16

Koenig Vineyards 2013 Viognier Williamson Vineyard, Snake River Valley, \$15

Pend d'Oreille Winery 2012 Meyer Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Washington, \$35

Pend d'Oreille Winery 2013 Bistro Rouge, Washington, \$15

Sawtooth Estate Winery 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$22

Sawtooth Estate Winery 2013 Estate Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$12

Sawtooth Estate Winery 2013 Trout Trilogy Carménère, Snake River Valley, \$30

Sawtooth Estate Winery 2012 Trout Trilogy Petite Sirah, Snake River Valley, \$30

Sawtooth Estate Winery 2013 Trout Trilogy Reserve Syrah, Snake River Valley, \$16





Snake River Winery 2012 Arena Valley Vineyard Sangiovese, Snake River Valley, \$20

Snake River Winery 2012 Arena Valley Vineyard Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$10

Split Rail Winery 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$27

Split Rail Winery 2012 Mourvèdre, Snake River Valley, \$29

Ste. Chapelle 2013 Panoramic Idaho Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$22

Ste. Chapelle 2013 Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$12

Telaya Wine Co. 2013 Boushey Vineyards Sruth, Columbia Valley, \$27

Vizcaya Winery 2014 Albariño, Naches Heights, \$22

Williamson Vineyard 2011 Sangiovese, Snake River Valley, \$18

Williamson Vineyard 2014 Dry Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$11

Williamson Vineyard 2104 Blossom Sangiovese Rosé, Snake River Valley, \$16

### **Bronze**

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Single Vineyard 3 Horse Ranch Vineyard Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$18

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Barrel Select Reserve Malbec, Oregon, \$28

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2014 Pinot Gris, Snake River Valley , \$16

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2013 Beau Geste, Idaho/Oregon/Washington, \$28

Bitner Vineyards 2011 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$25

Bitner Vineyards 2012 Menopause Merlot, Snake River Valley, \$28

Bitner Vineyards 2014 Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$17

Camas Prairie Winery 2015 Palouse Gold Mead, Idaho, \$13

Cinder Wines 2014 Laissez Faire White, Snake River Valley, \$16

Coiled Wine 2014 Rizza, Snake River Valley, \$28

Coiled Wine 2014 Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$35

Coiled Wine 2014 Dry Riesling, Snake River Valley, \$17

Crossings Winery 2012 Sémillon, Snake River Valley , \$17



Crossings Winery 2012 Meritage, Snake River Valley, \$24

Crossings Winery NV Roundup Triumvino, Snake River Valley, \$24

Feathered Winds 2014 Rosé, Snake River Valley, \$17

Fujishin Family Cellars 2013 Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$13

Fujishin Family Cellars 2013 Tempranillo, Snake River Valley, \$23

Fujishin Family Cellars 2013 Mourvèdre, Snake River Valley, \$23

Fujishin Family Cellars 2014 Gewurztraminer, Snake River Valley, \$16

Fujishin Family Cellars 2013 Viognier, Snake River Valley, \$16

Hat Ranch Winery 2012 Malbec, Snake River Valley, \$27

Hat Ranch Winery 2014 Hat Trick White, Snake River Valley, \$19

Hells Canyon NV Bird Dog White, Snake River Valley, \$15

Indian Creek Winery 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon, Snake River Valley, \$15

Indian Creek Winery 2012 Isabelle My Best Friend Malbec, Snake River Valley, \$22

Indian Creek Winery 2012 2012 Merlot, Snake River Valley, \$15

Indian Creek Winery 2014 White Pinot Noir, Snake River Valley, \$12

Indian Creek Winery 2014 Viognier, Snake River Valley, \$12

Koenig Vineyards 2012 Three Vineyard Cuvee Syrah, Snake River Valley, \$22

Lindsay Creek Vineyards 2013 Chardonnay, Washington, \$18

Lindsay Creek Vineyards 2013 Petite Sirah, Washington, \$35

Parma Ridge Winery 2014 Tre Bianchi, Snake River Valley, \$18

Pend d'Oreille Winery 2014 Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$18

Pend d'Oreille Winery 2013 Coyote Canyon Vineyard Primitivo, Washington, \$30

Snake River Winery 2013 Arena Valley Vineyard Unoaked Chardonnay, Snake River Valley, \$12

Snake River Winery 2011 Arena Valley Vineyard Malbec, Snake River Valley, \$20

Snake River Winery 2014 Arena Valley Vineyard Merlot, Snake River Valley, \$15

Snake River Winery 2014 White Table Wine, Snake River Valley, \$14